

**MINUTES
TOWN OF FORT MILL
PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
December 19, 2013
6:00 PM**

Present: Councilmen Huntley, Blythe and Helms, Manager Pieper, Clerk Beachum

Guests: Planning Director Joe Cronin, Alan Walters with Campco Engineering, Rob Walsh
With Campco Engineering, and Jon Hattaway with Cumming Construction

Planning Director Cronin opened the meeting by saying that due to the expansion of the two high schools (Fort Mill High and Nation Ford High), a traffic light is being proposed on A.O. Jones Boulevard (at Nation Ford High School) as a result of a traffic impact study. He stated A.O. Jones Boulevard is wholly owned and maintained by the Town, and thus, the Town would be wholly responsible for operation, maintenance, and other necessities for the proposed stoplight. He then introduced Mr. Alan Walters from Campco Engineering. Mr. Walters explained that with the expansion, the schools will hold 2,400 students at each high school, and with that increase in the number of attendees, traffic will increase significantly. As part of the expansion, the plan is to almost double the drop-off circulation loop, which will help to ease congestion on the main roads, but the issue will be when vehicles are exiting the school property trying to make a left turn. Mr. Walters reported on the numerous accidents happening at the school currently which shows it is an unsafe area for attempting a left turn. Campco has researched options beside a traffic light, but none were as safe or effective in their estimation as a stoplight. A traffic circle, or roundabout, is the second best option, but would increase costs significantly as they would need to acquire or purchase enough neighboring property on which to construct the roundabout, and it would cost upwards of \$500,000 and more to construct a roundabout. Mr. Walters said the proposed stoplight would move traffic in an orderly fashion, allow for left and right turns, and comes at a much lower cost than a roundabout. The proposed stoplight would run in the \$50,000-\$75,000 range and has been built into the expansion budget; he also related the school district is willing to cover the cost of installation and maintenance until the Town can come up with its own maintenance plan. He and his associates spoke with SCDOT about coordination of stoplights near the schools, and they also talked about how the SCDOT and other municipalities handle operation and maintenance of traffic lights. Mr. Walters said that most times, when a town does not have a traffic department or personnel dedicated to operation and maintenance of stoplights, they generally obtain maintenance agreements with contractors which are usually around \$2,500 annually. He stated the stoplight would need to be functional and operational by fall of 2015, if approved, and reiterated the engineering firm's recommendation is for a stoplight.

The Committee expressed reservations about the proposed stoplight and made Campco aware that the Town currently does not have personnel nor equipment to handle operation and maintenance of a stoplight. Also raised were concerns over financing, the costs of contracts for maintenance and operation, and how soon (and how often) the lights would have to be replaced. The Committee inquired about having a police officer or school resource officer direct traffic (primarily in the mornings as that is when traffic is the worst), and they discussed the benefits of a roundabout, especially the fact that roundabouts keep traffic moving. The engineering firm pointed out other risks associated with roundabouts would include student drivers and distracted drivers coupled with unfamiliarity with roundabouts has the potential to cause more accidents, though those accidents would inevitably be at

lower speeds and with less injuries and damage due to the nature of the roundabout forcing drivers to go slower.

The Committee, led by Councilman Blythe, thanked Mr. Walters and his partners for their time, presentation, and information. The Committee indicated they would like to investigate other avenues before making their presentation and recommendation to the full Town Council, and expressed their appreciation for the knowledge and information regarding this situation.

There being no further business before The Committee, the meeting adjourned at 6:52pm.

Respectfully submitted,

April Beachum
Town Clerk

Dennis Pieper
Town Manager